

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 and 24-29 were examined and reported in the Office Action. Claims 1-6, 11-13, 24-27, and 29 are rejected. Claims 5, 7, and 14-23 are cancelled. New claims 30-46 are added. Claims 1, 6, 24 and 27 are amended. Claims 1-4, 6, 8-13, and 24-46 remain.

Applicant requests reconsideration of the application in view of the following remarks.

I. 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

A. It is asserted in the Office Action that claims 1, and 4-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,208,923 issued to Hommel, et al. ("Hommel") in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,737,202 issued to Rosales ("Rosales").

Applicant has amended claim 1 with the limitations from claim 7. As asserted in the Office Action claim 7 would be allowed if re-written in independent form. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that amended claim 1 should now be allowable. Applicant's claims 4 and 6 (claim 5 being cancelled) depend on amended claim 1, and therefore, should be allowable as well for the same reason.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejections for claims 1, and 4-6 are respectfully requested.

B. It is asserted in the Office Action that claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Hommel and Rosales as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,315,954 issued to Richmond ("Richmond").

Applicant's claim 2 directly depends on amended claim 1, and therefore, should be allowable for the same reason as asserted in section I(A).

Accordingly, withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection for claim 2 is respectfully requested.

C. It is asserted in the Office Action that claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Hommel and Rosales as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,959,677 issued to Grieb ("Grieb").

Applicant's claim 3 directly depends on amended claim 1, and therefore, should be allowable for the same reason as asserted in section I(A).

Accordingly, withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection for claim 3 is respectfully requested.

D. It is asserted in the Office Action that claim 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Hommel, Rosales, Grieb and Richmond.

Applicant has amended claim 24 with the limitations from claim 7. As asserted in the Office Action claim 7 would be allowed if re-written in independent form. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that amended claim 24 should now be allowable as well. Applicant's claim 25 depends on amended claim 24, and therefore, should be allowable as well for the same reason.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection for claim 25 is respectfully requested.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's assertion that claims 7-10, and 28 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant has amended claims 1 and 24 to include the limitations of claim 7. Applicant has added new independent claims 35 and 41, which each include the limitations from claim 8 and the limitations of their respective

base claim and intervening claims. Applicant has added new independent claims 38 and 44, which each include the limitations from claim 10 and the limitations of their respective base claim and intervening claims.

Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1-4, 6, 8-13, and 24-46 as it now stands, are allowable for the reasons given above.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that claims 1-4, 6, 8-13, and 24-46 patentably define the subject invention over the cited references of record, and are in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited at the earliest possible date. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would be useful in moving the case forward, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned at (310) 207-3800.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: April 20, 2004

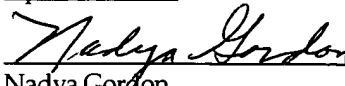
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I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the Patent and Trademark Office, Mail Stop Fee Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, Post Office Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, on April 20, 2004.


Nadya Gordon

April 20, 2004

Date